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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AFTERMATH OF THE PRESIDENTIAL RECALL  
ATTEMPT, U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their coverage June 14 on the confiscation of a record number of state-of-the-art illegal weapons in Pingtung Thursday morning; a planned declaration by pro-Green scholars calling for President Chen Shui-bian's resignation; Tropical Storm Bilis, which swept over the island Thursday night; the continuing investigation into First Lady Wu Shu-chen's alleged role in the ownership fight for the Sogo Department Store; and the release on bail of President Chen Shui-bian's son-in-law. The pro-unification "United Daily News" front-paged "[Former DPP Chairman] Lin Yi-hsiung Supports Pro-Green Scholars' Planned Declaration to Oust Bian." The newspaper also ran a banner headline on page three that said "Move to Collect Signatures to Oust Bian Will Be Open to All Taiwan People."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-status quo "China Times" criticized President Chen, saying "a political figure who has no credibility does not deserve to be called a nativist." The "Black and White" column in the "United Daily News" said unyielding nativist stalwarts have been shaken to the roots by the corruption and incompetence of the Chen administration. An editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" said the scholars' action reflects a growing public realization that any president who fails to fight corruption and exercise clean politics must be held responsible for such failures. An editorial in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News," on the other hand, discussed U.S.-Taiwan relations. The editorial urged the DPP government to engage in a clear dialogue with Washington over Taiwan's priorities, especially with regard to the island's national security, deepening democracy deepening, constitutional re-engineering, and ensuring its right of democratic self-determination. End summary.

¶3. Aftermath of the Presidential Recall Attempt

A) "Taiwan Has No Democracy If Its President Has No Credibility"

The pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (7/14):

"During the political upheavals triggered by the First Family over the past few weeks, A-bian and the DPP tried to polarize or draw a line between nativism and non-nativism in order to save Chen from the crisis. This is the point criticized by the afore-mentioned scholars in their statement. For some DPP supporters, it seems that identification with nativism can override political credibility. Some self-proclaimed passionate 'nativists' even used sophisticated remarks like 'there is a moral standard higher than honesty' to defend against the Taiwan people's doubts about the First Family's incorruptibility and credibility, and to rationalize their playing

on ethnic feelings. ...

"The Taiwan people have the right to look forward to a nativist regime. But nativism is by no means a substitute for any particular ethnic group or political party. A genuine nativist regime must stand close to its people and provide its people with a sound self-reflective environment so that their democratic awareness can be enhanced and enriched. For a dishonest politician, his sole purpose is to twist the information offered to the people, manipulate results, and control power. In the meantime, his behavior has naturally damaged the originally sound nativist, self-reflective democracy. A political figure who has no credibility does not deserve to be called a 'nativist,' and this is this paper's only comment on the First Family."

#### B) "The Calls of Pro-Green Scholars"

The "Black and White" column in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation; 400,000] noted (7/14)

"For the DPP, a group of pro-Green scholars calling for President Chen's resignation is in reality thornier to deal with than a recall motion proposed by the opposition parties. This is because the DPP members know very clearly in their hearts that the unyielding nativist stalwarts have been shaken to the roots by the corruption and incompetence of the Bian administration. ...

"On the surface, the statement is aimed at urging Chen to resign; on a deeper level, it is designed to call on the DPP to grasp the democratic values of a nativist regime again. To put it simply, President Chen has dragged the nativists into the quagmire of corruption, but the DPP must draw a line between itself and Chen so as to sustain its faith in democracy. But the question is: Does the DPP, which is deeply entangled in the net of power, have the strength to rise again? ..."

#### C) "Chen's Traditional Supporters Join Calls for Him to Resign"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (7/14):

"President Chen Shui-bian got a new blow to his authority on Wednesday as a group of leading intellectuals - people who have long been his and his party's loyal supporters - issued an unlikely statement urging him to resign on the grounds that he is morally weakened and has lost the trust of the people, the crucial qualities required of a national leader. ... The demand by the intellectuals for Chen to resign is significant in two important ways. First, their action reflected a growing public realization that any president failing to fight corruption and exercise clean politics must be held responsible for such failures. ... Another point of significance in the intellectuals' appeal for Chen to step down is that their move suggests a shift in the public mood toward Chen. That is, people holding feelings of dissatisfaction with him are no longer limited to the two major opposition parties - the KMT and the PFP - and their supporters."

#### 14. U.S.-Taiwan Relations

##### "Democratic Friends Need Clear Dialogue"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (7/14):

"One of the charges leveled against President Chen Shui-bian in the unsuccessful recall motion filed last month by the 'pan-blue' alliance of the Kuomintang and People First Party claimed that Chen had wrecked Taiwan's critical relationship with the United States. ... The reality is quite different as relations between Taipei and Washington remain on an even keel, despite occasional differences. ... There have undoubtedly been flaps and tensions between Chen's DPP administration and the Republican Party administration of President George W. Bush in Washington, but differences do not necessarily indicate fundamental discord. After all, China's rise can hardly be translated into an alliance of common values with the U.S., while Taiwan has had wide common interests with the U.S. ...

"Since prospects for a democratic transition in the PRC under State Chairman Hu Jintao are virtually nil, the primary challenge faced commonly by Washington, Tokyo and Taipei is how to cope with China's determined build-up of its military clout and its aggressive deployment of missiles and offensive forces opposite Taiwan. The strategic line that divides the U.S., Japan and Taiwan into a different camp from the PRC and North Korea will not vanish in the near term and the fundamental commonality of interests shared by Washington, Tokyo and Taipei will remain firm, even if the various leaders or administrations in these capitals have differences on how to cope with China's military threat. ...

"Strategically speaking, Taiwan has to avoid presenting its allies with unnecessary 'surprises,' especially during election periods, but also must be frank about explaining to policy-makers in Washington, Tokyo and other capitals what our priorities are, especially in fields such as national security, democratic deepening, constitutional re-engineering and ensuring our right of democratic self-determination. ... We should not compromise our resolution to deepen protection for human rights in order to 'cooperate' with the Bush administration's 'war on terror,' nor discount our resolution to realize the values of the world effort to curb greenhouse gas emissions as reflected in the Kyoto Protocol simply because Bush and his advisers do not believe in the existence of the global warming crisis nor abandon our commitment for peace in the face of Washington's theory of 'preemptive war,' a theory that Beijing would be only too pleased to accept."

YOUNG